Prior art mixers used for this purpose are disclosed, e.g., in US patents 5,279,709 and 5,575,559 and EP 060 150, WO 93/07961, WO-A-96/32186, and WO-A-96/33007. It is a characteristic feature of all mixers of the art that they employ a rotatable rotor in order to provide a sufficient mixing efficiency. The rotatable rotor specifically refers to a member which is connected to the drive through a shaft and most usually receives its power from the electricity supply of the mill. Furthermore, the mixer construction is usually such that a certain pressure loss occurs in the mixer. In practice, it means that the power compensation corresponding to the pressure loss caused by the mixer has been taken into account when selecting a pump which operates at some stage of the process and precedes the mixer. So, in practice, power is lost in the pump for compensating the pressure loss of the mixer as well as in the mixer itself for rotating its rotor.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 33 and 51.

Please further amend the pending claims herein as follows:[2]

24. (Twice Amended) Apparatus for mixing a fluid medium with a solids-liquid suspension, comprising:

a mixer casing having an inlet attached by a flange to inlet piping, and an outlet, and defining a flow axis between said inlet and outlet;

a conduit for feeding the fluid medium into said casing or inlet piping; and

a rotor freely rotatably mounted in said casing for free rotation about an axis of rotation which is transverse to said flow axis, said rotor having a center, a shaft mounted on bearings in said casing, and blades which leave said rotor center open.

[2] Pursuant to Rule 121(c), a marked-up version of the amended claims appears in Appendix II hereto and shows all changes by underlining added language and bracketing deleted language.